

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

One of the most interesting tilings that Comrades Paskutski and Baranoff, the leading Transcaspian commissars, pushed into Persia was a 5-foot lithographed poster, depicting in several colours three naked, emaciated Dravidians harnessed into a plough at the tail of which stood a ginger-whiskered John Bull, in white drill jacket and a sun helmet, complete with projecting incisors and bulldog pipe. In one hand he brandished an automatic pistol, in the other a *nagaika*, and the legend, in Russian, Persian and Turkish, told that "this is how the English plough in India." ²¹

In the autumn of 1920 British forces were finally withdrawn from Khorasan; at the same time the East Persia Cordon was also liquidated.

A few words may be added concerning the fate of Central Asia after the conquest of the country by the Bolsheviki. The provisional Ashkhabad government was replaced by a soviet, which promptly embarked upon a witch hunt of "counterrevolutionary" elements. The first week of soviet rule in that city brought the execution of forty ex-officers and their friends. Similar developments took place in Krasnovodsk. The Red Terror was directed from Tashkent by Comrades Iliava and Broido, the latter responsible for the organization of the Tashkent propaganda center.²² In Tashkent itself, in the meantime, a reorganization took place: the old Executive Committee gave way to the Turkestan Commission (*Turkkommissya*), which, instead of pretending to be a local emanation, was sent directly from Moscow. Two men headed this commission: Tomskey, president of the Central Council of Trade Unions (he was purged and committed suicide in 1937), and Rudzutak, later to be appointed Foreign Trade Commissar (also a victim of the Great Purge in the

igsjo's). The Turkestan Commission had instructions to pursue a more conciliatory policy toward the local population. As a result a sort of New Economic Policy experiment was tried in Turkestan: the Moslems, but not the local Russians, were permitted some measure of free trade.²³

In the conquered Khanates, the pretense of formal independence and "contractual relationship" with Soviet Russia was gradually

²¹ Blacker, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 267. Reprinted by permission of the author.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 236.

²³ See Elizabeth Bacon, "Soviet Policy in Turkestan," *Middle East Journal*, October, 1947, p. 392.